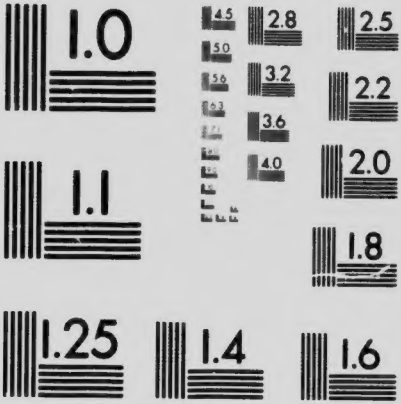

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MAPLE LEAVES AND SNOWFLAKES

ROSE FERGUSON

MAPLE LEAVES AND SNOWFLAKES

BY

ROSE FERGUSON

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Maple Leaves and Snowflakes

MAPLE LEAVES.

EMBLEMS of our lovely land
  Sermons ye are preachin:
Abler than orations grand,
  Silent but heart-reaching!

Touched by Beauty's fairy wand
  Forth ye stand in glory,
Whispering to breezes fond
  All the wondrous story.

Comes the cruel autumn blast,
  Hurls to earth thy splendor!
Listen as it hastens past—
  Wails of sad surrender!

Oft when Fortune's beaming smile
  Lights up Fame's adorning,
Or when Love and Life beguile,
  Death gives out his warning.

ST. NICHOLAS' NIGHT.

'Tis the sixth of December—St. Nicholas' Night—
And while mem'ry dictates, I am going to write
Of how it was spent in the dear, happy past,
In the halcyon days all too lovely to last,
When bright, rose-tinted dreamings, great castles in air,
And a dear, happy home with friends faithful and fair,
Unclouded by sorrow, unruffled by strife,
Formed the pure, placid source of the river of life.

'Twas the rule, and we followed it closely this eve,
That at seven we all our amusements should leave
And each take her place morrow's lessons to con;
But, alas! 'twas not books that our minds dwelt upon,
For we noticed that out of all danger were placed
The more breakable things which the study-hall graced;
And sundry such incidents all seemed to tell
There was something expected, and what, we knew well.

But the silence was short-lived, for, hark! there's
the sound
Of the door-bell! and hurrying footsteps resound.
Admittance is granted, and listen, the air
Bears the jingle of sleighbells, St. Nicholas is
there!
Then before we recovered the shock, at the door,
Fully fur-clad and bell-decked, with parcels
galore,
A smile on his face, tho' a whip in his hand,
Doth the patron of childhood, good Santa Claus,
stand.

For a moment we gazed on the vision so queer,
Curiosity now, as of old, drowning fear;
Then shriek after shriek echoes loud through the
hall,
And the desks are vacated, all crowd to the wall.
The strange visitor follows with menacing look,
All scatter for shelter to corner or nook.
Thus the chase is repeated till tired he grows
While the fugitives, breathless, seek naught but
repose.

But still more will be granted; for, changing his
tune,
'Tis the smile, not the whip, becomes paramount
soon.

Then free falls the candy, and fear dies away;
And as bon-bons will triumph where threats could not sway,
Each now owns to her faults, and makes promises strong
To amend in the future, and root out the wrong.
E'en the little ones follow, forgetting their fear,
And, stroking his furs, whisper, "Santa Claus, dear!"

Now the little man, satisfied, gathers his pack,
Grasps his whip in his hand, straps his goods on his back,
And amid the "Good-nights" and well-wishes of all
He departs, on his numerous errands to call.
And the clatter of voices, the laughter and fun
That belong to a "free night" have fairly begun
Ere the tinkling of bells o'er the new-fallen snow
Could have told them the route on which Santa did go.

Ah, I would we could more of such customs preserve,
More of faith in the fairies and legends which serve

To lend to the season of childhood a charm;
They leave sweet recollections, they're free from
all harm.
Soon enough do the "shades of the prison-house"
close
Till they hide the bright clouds whence the glory
still flows.
Let childhood enjoy the fair vision to-day,
For to-morrow it fades, 'tis too precious to stay.

ON BYRON'S "OCEAN."

A MASTERPIECE of poetry is thine,
O Byron, where "The Ocean" is thy theme.
Who could have wrought such treasure from the
mine
Of lofty thought as thou didst in thy dream
Of the "Childe Harold"? Well may we esteem
The pen which traced those words sublime and
free
As is the rush of waters strong and grand
That sweep from Torrid Zone to Polar Sea,
God's earthly image of the great eternity!

Accept, promoter of true liberty,
These humble lines in which I fain would tell
Of my great rev'rence for thy theme and thee.
The solitude which thou didst praise so well
Is here; and in my heart emotions swell
Which thrilled thy soul with noble nature-love,
When from the world thou didst elect to dwell
And dream those dreams which placed thee far above
The hosts of singers in whose ranks thou then didst move.

Who can resist the charm, the mighty power,
Which in "The Ocean" elevates the soul,
Makes us with nature bide in lonely bower,
Or on the shore 'yond which the waters roll?
Ah, praise we God who made the wondrous whole!
And may He pity one whom earthly broils,
Whom fashion's folly and domestic dole
All strove to strangle, but who slipped the coils
And left the world his name by his poetic toils.

"HEIMWEH."

To-NIGHT my whole soul is a passion of longing,
My thoughts, now unshackled, will constantly roam;
In the portals of memory visions are thronging
Of dear, absent friends, and that heaven, my home!

Every night 'tis the same: as Dame Twilight is gliding
Around me to lower the curtains of night,
And light all the candles, my feelings presiding
On fancy's fleet pinions will straightway take flight.

In spirit I visit the dear Hall of Study,
And steal in where music's soft breathings resound;
Or sit by the blaze of the night fire so ruddy,
And list to the stories that circle around.

Dear friends, in your hearts do you keep my place waiting,
Or, as Sol's brighter beams pale the late star away

Are your thoughts of the one who is absent abating?
New companions and joys fading old ones away?
Let me answer "Not so; but as distance will soften
And melt in its haze e'en the rock's craggy side,
So does memory's light, which illumines so often
But enhance all those scenes which a year now divides.

MUSIC OF THE WATER.

Oh, the hum of the bee
Is dear to me
As his deep tones thank the Giver
Of his winter store,
But it fades before
The delights of a gurgling river.

Oh, how sweet, how clear
Over vale and mere
Fall the notes of the birds' soft trilling!
But more pleased I stray
Where the rills at play
Are the air with their voices filling.

MUSIC OF THE WATER

Oh, what feelings deep
Through our soul's soul creep
When the night wind breathes her sorrow!
But the murmuring stream
In its evening dream
Seems a human tone to borrow.

'Neath a wordless power
In twilight's hour
Hath a soul-touched harp-chord bound us,
But the soothing strain
Can scarce remain
If the plashing waves surround us.

But th' inspiring swell
Which e'er doth dwell
In the raised bard's touch of love?
The cataract's leap
And tumultuous sweep
Move our souls by something higher.

Yea, the birds and bees
And the ev'ning breeze—
E'en Apollo's favored daughter—
I would gladly give
To forever live
By the rippling, rolling water!

MATER DOLOROSA.

MOTHER OF SORROWS! make my heart
  Dissolve in pity's tears
And in thy dolors bear a part,
  Tho' thick the mist of years
Is hung 'twixt this eve and the day
The last sword to thy soul found way.

DOLOR I.

Recall, my soul, the Temple grand;
Behold the Holy Parents stand,
While Mary, Virgin Mother mild,
Presents to Heav'n her Infant Child.
But mark, a hoary sage draws nigh
With rev'rence to the company,
And in prophetic voice and words
Foretells her sorrow in her Lord's.

DOLOR II.

Now change the scene to that dread night
Whose shadows hid the weary "Flight."
Again we see the Mother fair
Who clasps her Son with tender care,

While Joseph guides to far-off lands;
For men now seek with bloodstained hands
The life of Him who came to give
His heart's last drops that they might live.

DOLOR III.

The years roll on; what see we now?
Our Queen again, of saddened brow,
As, with her spouse, she seeks in vain
Her Son and Saviour to regain.
"Ah, have I lost my Child, my Lord,
Through fault of mine in deed or word
In anguish from her heart she cries,
And humbly seeks what fault there lies.

DOLOR IV.

The clouds frown dark on Calvary's steep;
Again we see, in sorrow deep,
The mother's heart now bleeds anew,
That heart of all on earth most true!
She shrinks not now, but turns to greet
Her Son, who toils with bleeding feet
Beneath His Cross, while all the crowd
Urge on, with blow and insult loud.

DOLOR V.

But yet a sharper pang will pierce;
For now she sees those demons fierce
Nail to the Cross with ringing blow
The Saviour whom they would not know.
Each stroke finds echo in her soul,
Each wound adds yet another dole,
Until the sword hath pierced His side
And heart-drops form the saving tide.

DOLOR VI.

And next beneath the Cross she stands
While men take down with loving hands
The Body, now all stiff and cold,
And place it in her arms. Behold
How ev'ry wound in her renews
As those of her dead Son she views;
How bitter, pent-up tears now flow,
And lave the form so dear below!

DOLOR VII.

The sword must once again pass through
The mother's heart, now proved so true.
Joseph and Nicodemus lay
The Body in the tomb away,

Then roll the stone to seal the place,
And homeward all their steps retrace.
Ah, now with grief she is alone,
Her Son, her Lord, her all, is gone!

Mother of Sorrows! On this eve
  Thy children fain would tell
Their love for Thee, who didst receive
  Thy seven fold grief to quell
The wrath Divine, for by thy Son
  Was death laid low, salvation won.

ESTRANGEMENT.

Stern phantom with uplifted hand
  In haste the cruel blow to deal,
Thy aim I do not understand,
  But, ah, thy wounds are slow to heal!

Unceasing vigil thou dost keep
  Where hearts by love and trust are bound,
That, entering, thou mayest sweep
  With thy dread arm such feelings found.

Tho' slight the fault, it magnifies
  Till 'twixt those souls a gulf doth yawn
Which all attempts to cross defies,
  And widens as the years wear on.

E'en Coleridge could not well explain
  Why we are "wroth with those we love."
We aye must bear the gnawing pain,
  And hope 'twill cease in realms above.

ESTRANGEMENT

Go, ask the sever'd why the course
  Of their affection is so changed.
They answer truly that the source
  Was pride, not wrong, which thus estranged.

In bright and cheery hours of morn
  Linked hand in hand they roamed the road,
With ne'er a thought that bitter scorn
  Would make their hearts its dread abode.

But when the sun in splendor grand
  On earth poured down his strongest rays,
Each threw aside his comrade's hand,
  And both pursued their chosen ways.

'Tis eve. They wander wide apace;
  But now, their journey almost o'er,
Kind Father, lead them to that place
  Where tears and partings are no more!

Let hope light up their less'ning hours
  And cheer the yet remaining way,
That having left life's sun and showers
  They'll live and love in endless day.

INVOCATION (TO THE MUSE TRUANT).

To-night I am waiting, am watching and longing
For one who is absent, yea, lingering still.
The shadows are falling and memories thronging,
But shadows and mem'ries the heart do not fill.
O come from thy beautiful valleys afar!
O come from thy mountains of glory and splendor!
Nor highland nor lowland should ever debar
The lover from hearts that are faithful and tender.

Long, long have I waited; oft ev'ning hath found me
Still watching in haunts thou art wont to frequent.
Shouldst thou give all thy thoughts to the joys that surround thee
While lonely thou leavest me here to lament?

INVOCATION TO THE MUSE TRUANT

O come from thy islands of beauty and light!
From lakes where thou lovest to linger at gloaming,
Nor watery channels nor shades of the night
Should check thy return, tho' afar thou art roaming.

Art thou nearer approaching? The darkness is folding
Her mantle more closely 'round ev'ning's fair form.
Must I leave with no hope of thee even beholding
Whom once I could meet with a hand-clasp so warm?
Return, by the rivers that ripple along,
Or by-paths so lavish of Nature's adorning!
Nor murmur of waters, nor music of song
Should lead thee to look on a true heart with scorning.

Ah, true! I have slighted the ways thou didst proffer;
E'en thee have forsaken to keep 'twixt the walls
Of the homely but much-trodden street where the coffer
Is chief of adornments, and nature-love palls.

I'm weary, and nothing can freshen the heart
Like the balm of which nature but knows th
instilling.
Shouldst thou scruple to lend of thy comfort a
part
When the mother to offer her solace is willing?

I've turned from the highway, I wait in the
valley
Where rustle the carpetings autumn has
spread.
The purple-topped hills with the clouds seem to
dally,
And candles of heaven appear overhead.
Then come from thy dwelling on water or land!
Let's wander again thro' the meadows and
wildwood.
Inspire me still with thy thoughts pure and
grand,
Dear muse, friend of youth and companion of
childhood!

CAPTIVE OF LOVE.

THE pageant now is over, but He for whom 'twas given
Remains to greet His people, e'en He, the Lord of Heaven!
'Tis thus I would portray Him. Not when the blaze of light
Burns brightest on the altar, and flowers, lilies white,
And other perfumed petals breath praise, and censers swing,
And prayers are wafted upward in honor of the King.

But when the lights burn dimly, e'en tenderly 'twould seem,
And all is holy stillness, like some pure, peaceful dream,
When kneeling in the shadows, suffused with rest and calm
The mind is bathed and softened, and soothed with holy balm,

'Tis then the chosen hour which Love doth h
the best;
Then calls He all the we y that He may gi
them rest.

And, leaving at the altar the burdens of a day,
The tired ones are strengthened to mount th
upward way.
The mind is freed from shackles, and fain woul
do and dare
To reach the great Ideal, nor pause till sheltered
there.
The lives of all God's heroes shine, beacons in the
way,
And light the narrow pathway to Everlasting
Day.

And tho' to-morrow morning may find our fervor
gone,
And duty, not transfigured, but plain to gaze
upon,
These thoughts must be the noblest and holiest
that come
When such surroundings wake them, and worldly
lips are dumb.
Thou God, of love the captive upon our altar-
stone,
Attract all hearts to seek Thee, and make the
world Thine own!

INDIAN SUMMER.

To-day I stole an hour
  From life, its rush and care,
For field and wood of autumn stood
  A-dream in hazy air.

I called on Lady Summer,
  But, ah, the change I found!
Her halls are bare; no longer there
  A wealth of sight and sound.

Like fickle friends who follow
  Where Fortune leads the way,
The birds and flowers of brighter hours
  Cannot be found to-day.

The agents of the winter
  In rude and boisterous ways
Have claimed her home and she must roam—
  These last are precious days.

Our royal Lady Summer,
  Altho' her heart is sore,
Now hides her pain and smiles again
  E'en sweetlier than of yore.

In robes of faded purple,
  A queen without a throne,
She holds her sway o'er hearts to-day,
  And rules by love alone.

NOVEMBER SENTIMENTS.

Ah, to-night I am weary, so weary!
  But it's not from a lack of rest;
'Tis the darkness and gloom of November,
  And the weight of a soul depressed.

All around me the shadows are creeping
  'Neath the frown of a leaden sky,
And the winds seem to muffle their weeping
  As they furtively pass me by.

Not a flower may be found in the woodlands;
  Not a leaf to adorn the trees;
Not a bird its sweet warblings to mingle
  With the notes of the ev'ning breeze.

NOVEMBER SENTIMENTS

Oh, the weight of a world-weary spirit
  Appears heavier far to bear
When the smile of our dear mother Nature
  Is withdrawn, and the sombre air

And the dull, dreary earth seem as empty
  As the heart that has loved and lost,
Where is naught but the low, plaintive echo
  From the hours when Joy was host.

But the day ever dawns from the darkness;
  And the birds will return again
When the slumbering flow'rets waken
  At the call of the April rain.

To the soul oft the dreariest moments
  But foreshadow the dawn of grace,
As the thunder-cloud, threat'ning, when riven
  Oft reveals the glad rainbow's face.

Should the faith of the Christian falter
  Tho' afar from his native land,
Groping vaguely through dismal darkness,
  When withdrawn seems the guiding Hand?

Never! Not with our hope for the morning
  With its smile of awakened friends
Who shall join in that mighty Beginning
  Where the Land of the Loyal extends.

ON THE FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME.

DEAR JESUS, let the year's first song
  Be one of rev'rent, loving praise
Of Thee to whom all thanks belong;
  And tho' the voice but feebly raise,
Ah, let Thy mercy feel my need,
The will is good, if not the deed.

Sweet Saviour, lo, the hearts of all
  Thy children turn this day to Thee;
Obedient to their mother's call,
  They turn to honor lovingly
The name which Thou to sinners gave,
That only Name with power to save.

O'er all the earth its praises ring,
  In ev'ry clime the head is bowed
When preachers name or choirs sing.
  Oh, may earth's echoes pierce the cloud
And join the chants which angels raise
Till Heaven itself is filled with praise!

ON THE FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME

Thou art the King of kings. That name
  Have countless ages given to Thee,
And earthly rulers still proclaim
  'Tis meet for Thy great majesty.
Creation's dawn beheld it Thine,
'Twill be the same at earth's decline!

The Prince of Peace Thou art. E'en now
  Thy coming earthly strife doth quell,
The hearts of men with joy endow,
  And clouds of enmity dispel;
Good-will and kindliness increase
To issue in the day of Peace.

The God of hosts, the Lord of Heaven
  And Earth speak Thine omnipotence.
The titles joyfully are given,
  Nor need, in Christian land, defence;
For all the words our tongue can tell
Would ne'er Thy praise sufficient swell.

But not by these to-day we call—
  A melody which sweetness breathes
Where'er its soothing notes may fall,
  A garland which the heart it wreathes
Leaves fair forever—by the name
Of JESUS we Thine ear now claim.

That title Thou hast won, for lo,
  On earth to mankind Thou didst come
To be a sharer in our woe
  And thus more surely lead us home.
Yea, e'en the death upon the tree
To win that name was chos'n by Thee.

Then bow the knee, the head incline
  On earth, in Heaven, and e'en below,
Whene'er that sacred name Divine
  Is heard, tho' blasphemy bestow.
Angelic choirs, help earth proclaim
The splendors of the Holy Name!

A SLIGHTED BAUBLE.

I WAS pleased with the bauble's brightness,
  How it glittered to foolish eyes!
And I thought, with a thrill of pleasure,
  Of my friends, and their glad surprise
When they saw for the first my treasure.
  What a joy was the mere surmise!

But they came, and they passed unheeding;
  And I would not bid them turn,
For my poor little toy was precious,
  And their forced regard I'd spurn.
So they passed, talking only of trifles
  Which were theirs. How my heart did burn!

Then I turned, and through tears fast falling
  Saw beside me the Giver, kind;
And I thought how I'd snatched the treasure
  From His hand, and could barely find
E'en a moment to thank Him for it,—
  'Twas but right they should prove unkind.

But He did not reproach nor slight me,
  Only said: "You are tired, child,
Come and rest while you tell your trouble."
  Ah, the voice was so sweet and mild!
And I wondered at all His Goodness
  Till the thought had my grief beguiled.

ONE WEEK.

We all have stood in dumb amaze
  When fell the light'ning-stroke,
And we have bowed our heads to ways
  Not ours to know. The yoke
Is sweetened, lightened by the thought
That others knew the good he wrought.

And we have seen his honored bier;
  Our chieftain, cold in death,
Was borne 'mid throngs, while many a tear
  And sorrow-laden breath
Attested more than sermons could
His life was spent in doing good.

Then passed we from funereal show,
  From laud of press and crowd
To daily life again. But, oh,
  Still o'er us hangs the cloud!
And voices break, and eyes grow dim
As loving prayers are breathed for him.

How oft to distant friends we say
"Good-night," while round us tolls
The midnight hour. But far away
Across the seas, there rolls
A message from the Eastern clime—
The music of a morning chime!

So 'tis with Thee, blessed man of God,
Thou hast an earlier morn.
While we in darkness still must plod
Thy endless day is born.
Last week Thou wert with us, and now
Around Thy tomb in prayer we bow.

CHIMES.

WHAT means this sudden burst of music pealing,
Each chime to chime replying, cadence rare!
It thrills my very fibres, rousing feeling,
Like chords to music waked by passing air.
In quick'ning time and perfect rhyme
The notes now rise, now fall.
Some cause must be, but not for me
To question fact at all.

Still on they chime, in greater volume rolling,
A very burst of music o'er and o'er!
But deep within my heart a faint bell tolling
Foretells a time when joy shall be no more.
Rich and full the sound
That is echoed round
Till the air with music teems!
Joy has come, and oh,
How the moments go,
Like our fair but fleeting dreams!

Dear heart, they're ceasing! Slower grows the motion,
But sweeter the vibrations as they fade;
They seem to tell of even-tide devotion,
And light and love that will not be dismayed.
Rising and falling, mem'ries recalling,
Dearer the melody now as it dies.
Always 'tis after moments of laughter
Love comes most lasting, embalmed in our sighs.

A CHOICE.

ONE morn in the beautiful springtime,
On a hill, robed in garments of May,
With half-finished wreaths fading round her
Sat a child, wearied out by her play.
Now she gazed far above at the mountain,
Then beneath, where the bright valley lay.

The path up the mountain is narrow,
And 'twere wearisome surely to climb;
But Heav'n bends in love at the summit
O'er the sun-lighted snow-peaks sublime,
And down to the child floats an anthem
Chanted sweetly, in slow, measured time:
"Onward, brave hearts, altho' the way is weary
Refreshing rest awaits you at the end.
Upward, nor pause, tho' all seem dull and dreary
The light of Heaven soon with those shades shall blend.
Ave Maria, hear thou our prayer!
Ora pro nobis! We long to join t[illegible]e there."

Then glancing beneath at the valley
So resplendent in beautiful green,
And bathed in the brightest of sunbeams,
Most gladsome the groups that were seen.
Unconscious the child slipped to join them
Allured by the laughter and sheen.
"Come join us in our frolics
About this happy vale!
Bedeck your heads with flowers,
Let mirth and song prevail!
Till lovely, languid Summer breathes
Her notes of joy and pain,
Till you have drunk life's bitter-sweet,
Ah, with us here remain!"

Disrobed of her child-dress, the maiden
Now stood watching with wondering eyes
The scene which allured, yet repelled her;
Then she gazed where the pure, placid skies
Kissed the brow of the beautiful mountain,
And a prayer rose to Heav'n with her sighs.

She knew that afar on the mountain
Summer's heat would be tempered by snow.
"Delay not," a voice seemed to whisper,
"On thy path vines and brambles will grow."
And leaving the vale she ascended,
Praying Heaven the strength to bestow.

THE DEAD PASTOR.

THE month of June of fullness tells.
It is the month [illegible] God's dear Heart
To man and Nat[illegible]th impart
Rare grace, which m[illegible]e our love impels.

Nature, in recompense, hath given
Her lavish store with beauty rife;
And we—our rose—a human life
That toward perfection well hath striven.

For with the month went out the breath
Of one, who thro' long years had sought
To mould our ev'ry deed and thought,
And teach us how to conquer death.

'Twas not with flow'ry speech he wrought.
Tho' he encouraged those who strove
To 'broider English, he but wove
Plain warp and woof of honest thought.

Tho' frail his frame, his soul was strong.
His mind's keen edge sought ev'ry phase
Of human life; could guide our ways
From childhood on to age, along

The devious paths which oft perplex.
His judgment, sane, e'er brushed aside
The brambles. Vainly no one cried
For succor from the ills that vex.

And even as we knelt around
His honored clay, with sigh and tear,
Methought the voice we held so dear
Still spake, could we but hear the sound,

And said, "Waste not in idle grief
Your precious time, my friends, but pray
And watch while yet ye have the day.
The span of life is all too brief."

JUNE.

SWEET as the roses' bloom,
Rich as their loved perfume,
Bringing a joy that aye borders on pain,
Cometh the month of June
(May we our lives attune!)
Cometh the month of God's dear Heart again.

March, as the infant Spring,
Tears with rare smiles doth bring.
March hath life's grey much suffused with the gold.
Well that its patron be
Rich in humanity—
Joseph, the leal, prudent father of old.

April's the growing child;
Sunshine and showers mild
Call forth the beauties that dormant have lain.
Earth's resurrection morn,
Blossom that hides the thorn,
Glorious season of joy after pain!

May is the maiden fair.
Lo! in her flowing hair
Pure woodland lilies and windflowers wild!
Free as the streams that run
'Neath the yet tempered sun,
Mother of purity, she is thy child!

June, and the woman stands,
Roses within her hands,
(Do the thorns prick her? She knew they were there).
Brilliantly beams the sun,
Life is at last begun,
June has its thorns, but its roses are fair!

'Tis love's fulfilling time,
Poetry's perfect rhyme,
Rose of the year as 'tis month of the rose.
'Tis when God's Heart in love
Stoops from His Home above,
Drawing us closer, our joys and our woes.

LIBERATED.

"YEARS of weary pain are ended,
Well indeed thy cross was borne;
All thy patient prayers ascended
From a heart by anguish torn,
Till my Father-feeling tender
Would allow no farther test;
Now I call thee home to render
Thy account and be at rest.
Rest, sweet boon thou hast not known,
Take it now before My Throne!
Here receive thy verdant palm,
Sign of victory and calm;
On thy locks, so bleached by pain,
Shall this garland fair remain.

Take the harp, and let its strains
Melt what trace of grief remains.
Thus the faithful ones at eve
'Tis My pleasure to receive,
Bidding them, the Blessed, come
And possess their destined Home."

A DREAM.

THE other night I died (so real the dream),
The sight had left my eyes, and in my ears
The sound of many waters, and my heart
Strained wildly at its moorings till they slipped
And set it free. I tried in vain to pray;
So trusting in the mercy of our God
Through intercession of His chosen ones
(And prayers of our dear mother, lately dead,
But still a member of the three-fold Church),
My soul went forth upon its quest alone.
And, glancing backward at the senseless clay
'Round which a few were weeping, all my thought
Was pity for such blindness, when ahead
Were gleams of Glory, who would linger here?
Nay, onward to the cleansing fires and pay
The utmost farthing! Who could wish delay?

And then I woke, and, moving gingerly,
And testing speech and feeling, found I lived,
And joyed in finding; but the dream remained
To comfort the lone places in a world.

SNOWFLAKES.

FLUTT'RING from the lap of Heaven
  Down upon the dreary earth,
By the breath of angels driven,
  Shower buds of airy birth!

See them falling! softly beating,
  Sailing on, their petals spread,
Kissing hill and dale in greeting,
  Pausing, birdlike, overhead.

When the summer blossoms wither,
  Leaving earth so bare and cold,
Come these winter-flowers hither
  Which with joy we now behold.

Uplands, valleys bloom in whiteness,
  And the trees which lately mourned
For their summer robes of brightness
  Are with fairer dress adorned.

SNOWFLAKES

Lovely snowflakes! ye a double
Mission seem to here fulfil,
And a blessed balm in trouble
Is the lesson ye instill.

He whose wisdom hath seen fitting
To inflict a grief or pain,
Ne'er His Providence omitting,
Makes what seems our loss a gain.

SONNETS

LIFE.

Ah, life, thou art indeed a puzzling play.
  Thy scenes are varied, actors one and all
  So bent on seeming real, they recall
Scarce even to themselves that nought shall stay
For background at the "finis" of the play
  Except the grave, when answering the call
  They reappear to bow farewell to all,
Then sleep awhile before the dawn of day.

Perplexing drama! Yet, when all is done,
  The question asked is not—how we have found
The part assigned us, but—how far we've won
  The Manager's approval. If around
  The answer all our hopes and aims would cling,
The vexing theme would prove a simple thing.

MUSINGS.

And this is e'en the spot, the self-same spot!
These very walls looked down on other rows
Of eager faces then as now on those
Which daily turn to me in waking thought.
Perchance 'twas from this very desk he taught
The daily lessons, or, at session's close,
Sat here to con the morrow's work. Disclose,
Ye silent walls, the airy castles wrought
On fancy's ground, as, lingering he mused
Upon the future, kindly hid from view,
Or hastened homeward where love's light diffused
A sacred halo 'round that household new.

Heav'n send my father's spirit down to me
That I may do my duty, even as he.

A REAL HERO

WHO is a hero? Is it he who flings
His gauntlet to the world, and, grandly bold,
His will 'gainst ev'ry odds doth firmly hold,
Believing man is meet for mightiest things?
Ah, is it not from such a source that springs
The stubborn schoolboy's valor? And behold,
In fall of Lucifer, that story old,
The selfsame spirit wrought such fatal things.

Or is it he who schools his will to bend,
But whose live spirit love of right e'er fans
To flame when needed? All whose acts intend
The angels' Gloria, and not the man's.*

This is a real hero. This is he
Of whom is ever need, tho' many be.

*Swinburne's "Glory to man in the highest."

TWILIGHT REVERIE.

'Tis sweet to sit alone at ev'ning calm,
To let oblivion steal upon the soul
And drop into the wearied mind a balm
Of precious healing; free awhile control
From long and careful vigil over thought,
Unheeding all that is, and all that's sought.
And while without the gloaming wraps the earth
In sombre veiling, and the ev'ning breeze
And soft bird-voices join in breathing forth
Their nightly orisons from all the trees,
Silent, to view with flowing heart the scene,
Unmindful of the cares that may have been.

'Tis thus we foster in our hearts a love
Of Nature, and her mighty God above.

THE "BEND."

(SAUGEEN RIVER, WALKERTON, ONT.)

THE hazy light of a September day
Now bathes in soft'ning rays a scene too fair
For pen to picture. On the lazy air
The cricket-chirpings fall, but melt away
Before the cadence of the lovely lay
The water sings, as with a beauty rare
It circles 'round the grassy levels there,
Or paints itself with tints of maples gay.

Beyond, the stately banks majestically
Uprise to guard the River's lovely form,
And all their happy moods she smiles to see,
But darkens when they scowl upon the storm.

While Nature thus presents so sweet a play,
Ah, let us linger, neath her soothing sway!

WE FALTER IN THE MISTS.

One winter morning, forth from my abode,
Which stood upon the summit of a hill,
I issued into sunlight, and a thrill
Of keen delight swept o'er me, for the road
Was gemmed with jewels, and the sun bestowed
Bright smiles on all the waking world until
The trees burst forth in crystals, gleaming chill,
And all the world with splendor overflowed.

Beneath, the vale lay wrapped in vapor grey,
And from the glory of a brilliant morn
My path led on through where the shadows lay,
With not a gem to brighten or adorn.

So youth's ideals past, in life's brief day,
We falter in the mists that dim the way.

ROSEDALE.

ROSEDALE, thy name calls up ideals fair,
  But, viewed on this autumnal day, when thou
  Dost wear the purple halo 'round thy brow,
The real seems of beauty e'en more rare.
Wouldst know its charm? Then to this spot repair,
  For ne'er can poet's pen nor painter's brush
  Portray the glamor of the sunset flush
Flung round the glens, and brooding ev'rywhere;

O'er trees in autumn's splendor all ablaze,
  O'er wires and bridges till they also seem
So bathed and softened in October haze
  They do not mar the glory of the dream.

Such scenes of beauty sometimes here are given,
We cry, "If this be earth, oh, what is heaven!"

AS ONE EMERGING FROM HIS DAILY TOIL.

As one emerging from his daily toil,
With thoughts still bent upon its strain and strife,
And all the problems which perplex a life,
Sees but the narrow street, its rush and moil,
Till from the scene his spirit doth recoil,
And by chance, uplifts his weary eyes
In silent application to the skies,
And stars to find the vision earth clouds spoil.

For o'er him bends the lovely dome of blue,
Agleam with myriad stars; while silently
The glorious orb of night is sailing through
That sea of light, all pure, serene and free.

So, toiler, weary from life's busy day,
Look up, for heaven is there to cheer thy way!

NOVEMBER SONNETS.

I. "OUT OF THE DEPTHS."

THE Year's fair form, alas, is growing old,
And all her beauty, subject to decay,
Now falls from her like vesture worn away,
And leaves her solitary, lone and cold.
We, Nature's children, in our hearts enfold
Her moods, and life to us now seemeth grey.
Our friends, like summer's trappings, may not stay;
And where the gleam once led, dark gloom hath rolled
Her shadow, till, like Hamlet, all our world
Is dreary, flat, unprofitable; all
Our hopes and dreams like autumn leaves down whirled!
From out the depths, O Lord, hear Thou our call!

Hark! thro' the selfish gloom that shroud's earth's sons
God sends His answer by His suffering ones.

II. "Have We Cried Unto Thee?"

You say you cry "from out the depths," my
friends;
They are but mirrored shallows of the soul.
We call from lakes whose liquid fires roll
In torturing waves, tho' hope with anguish
blends.
Our loves ye had on earth, and God intends
That you may help us here, and make us whole
By off'ring Him your prayers, and all life's
dole,
Thus making for our frailty due amends.

You have the blessed gift of charity.
We may not ease our hearts by pity's tears
For those dread depths which anguish hopelessly,
Where justice reigns and mercy disappears.
Drop in our suff'ring deeps your tears, your woes,
That you, as well as we, may find repose.

WAITING FOR THE DAWN.

I SIT and wait to see night's veil withdrawn,
So long it hath been dark, the hours so drear!
Now e'en the shadows—sprites which hovered near
And roused my fancy—even they are gone.
The shades are thick'ning, fold and fold upon,
Until to outstretched arms they would appear
To form a barrier. Can it now be near?
'Tis ever darkest just before the dawn.

Methought the light was breaking! Like the lark,
My spirit soars to greet the glorious sun.
'Tis morn! Birds warble matins!—Nay, still dark—
'Twas an illusion. Day is not begun.

Dear God, I wait Thy time, it ne'er is wrong,
But yet my heart will cry, "How long? How long?"

ASH WEDNESDAY.

Sons of the North, in tropic climes exiled,
Tho' viewing all the pageantry and pride
In florid Nature's march, have often sighed
For weather grey; and turned, unreconciled,
From brilliant blue monotony, to wild,
Free dreams of home. 'Tis there they would abide.
For tho' the winds were rude, they merely tried
A friendly combat, dear to Nature's child.

Our rugged Browning welcomes each rebuff
That fans the spark which animates our clod.
Strong hearts find worldly pleasures not enough
But mount by conflict to the throne of God.

The soul, aweary of life's sun and flowers,
Now hails grey Lent, restorer of her powers.

LIFE'S GRANDEST WORDS.

ASCEND the highest heaven of earthly joys,
Then sink thro' dolor to the depths of hell;
Or, take the middle course, where "All is well"
Comes sounding thro' the night, and fear destroys;
Plumb Nature's secrets; find what Art employs
To hold her worshippers; bid Science tell
Her wondrous tale; then take your fame and dwell
In Pleasure's tents, and learn how she decoys.

You've run the scale of human joys and woes;
The earth has yielded up her hidden lore;
You've drunk of all delights. Is your repose
Untroubled, restful? Come, what seek ye more?
Ah, peace is found when, with the humblest one,
You learn earth's grandest words, "Thy will be done."

THE FIRST CANADIAN MARTYR.

THE snow-clad earth and shrouded forest lay
In floods of moonlight where they made their camp—
Old Père de Noue and men. A three-leagued tramp
From Trois Rivières, on snowshoes, all that day,
Had left Fort Richelieu still far away.
The guides slept well. The kind old Father rose
To reach the Fort, while still they took repose,
And send them aid with pack and heavy sleigh.

A blinding snowstorm hid the moon's clear light,
And blurred the landscape, while he circled wide,
And back o'er his own footsteps all the night.
At morn he knelt in prayer, and, praying, died.

A marbled form with cross and snowshoes told
The Mission's earliest martyr was enrolled.

JOGUES.

THE frail but dauntless black-robe, Jogues, whose zeal
Had carried him to far Superior's shore
From old St. Lawrence' waters, and who bore
To the Tobacco nation God's appeal,
He, on a journey for the Mission's weal,
Was taken captive, and for two long years
Endured such woe in Mohawk-land our tears
Forbid the reading, and our senses reel.

Escaped to Europe, kings and princes vied
To do him honor; but he turned again
To Western wilds, and, God-like, strongly tried
To win the Mohawks into Faith's domain.

His "Mission of the Martyrs" well was named,
And he the noblest sacrifice it claimed.

LONGER POEMS

JEAN DE BRÉBEUF.

Of Jean Brébeuf I sing, the noble son
Of Normandy, whose life was lost and won
In our beloved Ontario, where he
Upraised the Cross by Huron's inland sea
Long centuries ago. Of him I sing.
His valiant life and martyr's death should ring
Adown the ages in Canadian homes!

And first we see him where our fancy roams
In old Quebec, in Sixteen-thirty-four.
We pause beside their hospitable door—
St. Mary's—cradle of that mission band
Who aimed to win a continent. Now stand
Upon its humble threshold, and we see
Our hero, 'mid the black-robed company
Assembled from their labors, six in all.
'Tis he of soldier mien, erect and tall,
But stamped with priestly imprint through long years
Of self-restraint and study. Naught he fears
Of men nor demons, for he comes to give
His labors and himself that Truth might live.
His heart is with the Hurons, whose far land
Is full of peril, but in promise grand.

And next we see him leader of the three
Who bore th' unwilling Hurons company
On their return from trading with the French.
Nine hundred miles in frail canoes might quench
The fires of zeal, as up the Ottawa
'Gainst raging floods and torrents, none they saw
But sullen Indians. Then by Nipissing
And down French River, onward journeying,
They came to Georgian Bay. Brébeuf alone
Was landed, for his comrades, feeble grown,
Were slower coming, and had lost the way.
The Indian guides went on. He knelt to pray
In that lone land, and all his prayer was praise
To God who guided them o'er weary ways
To this desired place. 'Twas Thunder Bay
Whose shores he trod, and, stretching far away,
The homes of all the Hurons. Here would be
A field of labor worthy of the three.

The hospitable Hurons built a home
Of Indian model; more they need not [illegible]
The black-robed trio, [illegible] with skilful [illegible]
Arranged their treasures, marvels in that land
Of simple living. Daily swarmed the guests
To gaze on wonders and to make reques[illegible]
They turned the handmill, heard the little clock
"The Captain"—give its orders. It could talk

And, striking twelve, said "Hang the kettle on
At four it bade them all "Get up, begone!"
The fathers daily shared their sagamite
And learned the language from their guests. At night
These old-world scholars found congenial task
Translating French to Huron. Need we ask
Their first attempts? They formed in Huron rhyme
The Pater Noster, Credo, Ave Mary
Was always for the children, who in throngs
About Brébeuf would chant the holy songs,
He in his cap and surplice, to impress
The budding minds of this small heathenness
The elders heard the story of the Cross
But hard it is to warm the cold from doors
The winter brought festivities and rites
Which spoiled the days, made hideous the nights
And dulled the fathers' teaching. Then the "Dreams," to banish sickness came, and
All semblance of intelligence, till spring
Dispersed the tribes for summer's journeying.
The seasons passed. The courage, kindness, tact,
Unfailing in the fathers, did react
Upon the savages, and many came
From far, and heard at least their Maker's name.

In Sixteen-thirty-six the Hurons held
The great "Feast of the Dead." Brébeuf, impelled
By urgent invitation of the chiefs,
Beheld the rites they practised in their griefs
When ev'ry decade all the dead were borne
To common sepulture, 'mid scenes forlorn;
And here baptized the captured Iroquois
Who ran the gauntlet by their awful law.
'Twas in this summer that Brébeuf sent down
Davost and Daniels to Quebec, to crown
Their two years' work by founding there a school
For Huron children, 'neath these fathers' rule;
The grey old Fort returning to his aid
Such men as Jogues and Garnier. Undismayed,
These frail but fervent priests took up the load
'Mid pest and fever in their new abode.
Each Huron home was visited, and there
Were found the sullen inmates in despair.
Through all the winter raged the smallpox pest,
And toiled the fathers without thought of rest,
But only strove to gain a soul for God
By loving-kindness to the earthly clod.

So passed in gloom the days of Thirty-seven,
Till spring relieved their stress, and clouds were riven
By radiant beams of hope. The Mission spread;
Our Lady's Huron Chapel raised its head

Amid a wood of pine. Its altar fair,
With shining sacred vessels, pictures rare
Of God and His sweet Mother, brought from
France
With untold labor, all did much enhance
The Christian worship in the Indian mind,
And God was to His servants doubly kind,
For here a noble savage, in the pride
And strength of manhood, joined the Faith and
tried
To win his brothers. 'Twas a ray of light
To break the gloom of that long heathen night!

But hope is oft deferred, and hearts made
strong
By weary waiting. Sorcerers had long
Denounced the fathers as the cause of all
The red-men's woes. And now they did recall
As charms the household objects. Even the clock,
Once loved, now struck a death-knell; and a shock
Of terror thrilled the Indians at the sound
Of chanted litanies at night, as round
The Mission ranged dark forms in hate and fear.
Brébeuf, the bravest, thought the end was near,
And boldly ent'ring councils, where were planned
The modes of death most fitting, would demand
A hearing, and uphold his cause so well
That fainter sounded their funereal bell.

'Mid rise and fall of fortune flew the years,
And spread the missions o'er the land; till fears
Of Iroquois invaders, and the need
Of more concerted action to succeed
If trouble came, gave birth to that famed home
Upon the River Wye. For those who roam
Among the Neutral Nations, where the roar
Of Ongiara deafens, or on shore
Of Nottawa, Tobacco Nation's Land,
'Twould be a safe retreat. 'Twas therefore planned
A fort, with walls of masonry, these flanked
With bastions used as magazines; and ranked
Within were roomy dwellings, and their pride,
The Church of Sainte Marie. Then just outside
The walls a house of rest for Indians stood,
Where many daily found repose and food,
And where, on Sunday, open stood the door,
And free the feast, if prayer had gone before.
'Twas like a page from patriarchal days,
Or feudal times, when lords and serfs did praise
Their God together. Here the working-men
With priests and soldiers fared; and here again
We see Brébeuf, grown older. Fifteen years,
Unswerving purpose, through his hopes and fears,
Have deepened his intensity, and given
More fully all his thoughts and acts to Heaven.

His colleague, Lalemant, looks slight and pale
Beside the stately form. But what avail
A lion-heart and dauntless deeds when time
Has struck his hour, e'en now, in manhood's prime?

At Trois Rivières, in Sixteen-forty-eight,
The Iroquois were beaten; and elate
With victory, the Hurons, who had come
Thus far to trade their furs, now sought their home
At Fort St. Joseph, Father Daniel's Post,
Not far from Sainte Marie, where they would boast
Their triumph. But the Iroquois were there
Before them, and their village, once so fair,
In ashes! Like Sebastian of old
Had Daniel died, true shepherd in that fold
Of helpless aged and children. 'Twas the first
Of Huron martyrdoms, but not the worst!

Thus passed the months of autumn, winter, spring,
Till March of Forty-nine, when everything
Was bleak and bare before the burst of life
Renewed. The bygone summer's awful strife
Was not forgot; but like doomed people stood
The Hurons, nor would change their listless mood

For all the Fathers' urging. Sainte Marie
Had sent Brébeuf and Lalemant to be
The pastors of St. Louis' Mission. There
One sunrise came three runners in despair
From Fort St. Ignace, they the only three
Of its four hundred souls escaped! "Now flee
For life!" the chieftains counselled. Many fled
And left the sick and helpless, for the dread
Of death by Iroquois was strong. There stayed
Some warriors with the priests, and these essayed
To hold the Fort, but vainly. All were led,
Stark naked, from the blazing town, whose dead
And helpless fed the flames; and happy they
Who met such easy death that awful day!

They drove the captives to St. Ignace' Fort
With clubs and sticks; then left for the support
Of Sainte Marie's besiegers, who were driven
Upon St. Louis. Bravely now had striven
The rallied Hurons, and the Iroquois
In panic fled the land. But first they saw
Their hundred victims blazing at the stake
Within St. Ignace! Rev'rently we take
A last look at our hero. He has striven
With timid Lalemant, to picture Heaven
To shrinking converts, and in Master's tone
Denounced the torturers. No sound or moan

Escapes him as the torches scorch and sear!
The Iroquois, in wonder and in fear,
Thrust red-hot irons down his mouth and throat,
Then lead out Lalemant, that they may gloat
Upon *his* fear and horror. Now they've hung
A burning necklace on him! and among
The torturers, a Huron renegade
Pours boiling water on his head! "You made
So many go to Heaven thus," he said,
"We wish to make you happy when you're dead."
They cut his flesh in strips, and yet no sound
Of weakness; then, in awe, they range around
To drink his life-blood and devour his heart,
That they may gain his courage, e'en in part.

So passed Brébeuf, the lion-hearted son
Of Normandy. His life was lost and won.

A little later, when the foe had fled,
Came friends from Sainte Marie to find the dead;
And lovingly they placed his poor remains
And those of Lalemant at rest. The rains
And sun of centuries have beat upon
Their lonely graves, for all their work has gone
To seeming ruin; but their lives still stand
As inspirations in our Western land.

AN INCIDENT OF 1813.*

(FEBRUARY 21, 1813.)

MY children, 'tis a hundred years since this fair land of ours,
Aroused from youthful slumbering, had need of all her powers.
'Twas when our cousin to the south, a rough and growing boy,
Determined we should share his sport; and he had won a toy—
The bauble independence—so he scorned the motherland.
He thought us keen to join the game. He didn't understand.

You know the war of 1812—you've read of Lundy's Lane,
Of Brock upon the fatal "Heights," and Laura's path of pain;
From Mackinac to old Quebec, thro' fort and forest wild,
You've traced our boundary battle-ground where hordes of foemen filed;
And tho' 'tis now a glory-roll shining adown the years,
Our sires and mothers wrote the names in blood and bitter tears.

*For historical incident see Coffin's "War of 1812."

Perhaps the bravest deeds were done where loud
Niagara roars,
When, far outnumbered by the foe, we drove him
from our shores.
But typical of Canada in self-reliant mood
Was brave Macdonell's winter charge at Ogdens-
burg, whence rude,
Undisciplined marauders oft were wont to sally
forth
And rob the peaceful hamlets of their neighbors
to the north.

Thus Brockville had been visited; and when, with
flag of truce,
Macdonell, crossing to protest, was treated with
abuse,
And challenged to a fight on ice, his Highland
blood was hot.
He knew the Governor's desire for peace, and
liked it not.
Just then Sir George was journeying to Kingston
from Quebec,
And being asked for leave to fight, and hold the
foe in check,
He graciously permitted they should practise
mimic war
And keep the enemy employed till he had trav-
elled far.

Macdonell chose his little force—militia of the land,
But chiefly his Glengarrys, who would not misunderstand—
And said, " My men, in deeds, not words, we fight this side the line;
Now who will cross St. Lawrence ice—I grant there's danger fine—
And teach those Yankees how to fight in open, manly war?"
Old Prescott echoed to the shout, " Glengarrys to the fore!"
For older men that battle-cry recalled their Highland home,
And scenes on southern fighting-fields, when doomed afar to roam
From Scotland's well-beloved hills. For all the rousing cheer
Bespoke their love of Canada, adopted land most dear.
Before, the frozen river lay, a mile or more across,
And if the treacherous ice should hold, still great must be their loss,
For facing them from Ogdensburg was many a mounted gun,
And Forsyth with five hundred men could show a foe some fun.

Such thoughts might well have crossed their
minds that February morn
When in the cold, grey light of dawn 'twould
seem a hope forlorn.
But Highland blood was ever hot; Canadian
hearts are strong.
Together, at the word, they swept resistlessly
along;
Then, forming into two attacks, to left and right
they sped;
The right were gallant Jenkins' men, the left
Macdonell led,
And 'neath a devastating fire, thro' heavy ice and
snow,
He rushed them up the farther shore—his guns
are stuck below!
'Neath raking fire of batteries they work in fran-
tic haste—
The guns are gained! They join attacks without
a moment's waste,
For Jenkins, wounded thrice, is down; but now
the men press on,
Right into Ogdensburg, to find defenders all with-
drawn
And town deserted. They have fled before the
swift advance
Of that resistless storming-force who nothing left
to chance.

And now the daring deed is done, and Ogdensburg is gained;
But in that hasty exit war's impediment remained—
The dead and wounded. Those who breathed were sure their hour had come.
Macdonell, teaching manly war, now drove the lesson home
By kindly conduct to the weak, and stern commands to spare
The homes and private property. So all was just and fair;
And out of Ogdensburg no more did raiders sally forth,
Despoiling peaceful homesteads of their neighbors to the north.

Ah, we were childish nations then, when little John Canuck
Feared not to face the larger boy—we glory in his pluck—
But now, to man's estate attained, when feuds of childhood fade,
Let "Peace with Honor" be our stand, not bold, but unafraid.
And may the glorious heritage our fathers died to hold
Be loved and cherished as it was in those brave days of old.